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can be selectively removed by cutting or trimming to select the size of the aperture to match the size of the support element thereby enabling the support element to be received through or within the opening and the perimeter engagement surface of the selected aperture to engage the support element in such a manner allowing the housing to be securely attached to the support element using the fastener.

26. (Amended) A sign according to claim 24 in which the side strip or side flange includes a first part in the form of a projection and a second part in the form of a slot, channel, groove, rebate or cut-out, the first and second parts being complementary so that the projection is received in the slot or groove for interconnecting the housing to another housing so as to form the sign when said housings are interconnectively fitted together about the support element.

The remaining claims 18 to 25, 27 to 32 remain unchanged.

REMARKS**I. Objection to the Drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a)**

The Examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) on the basis the drawings do not illustrate the details of the side strip (claims 26 to 29) and the fastener (claims 25, 29 and 30).

The applicant respectfully notes that both the side strip and the fastener are shown as feature 32 in figures 1, 2 and 3, as described in the description at paragraphs [0041] to [0043]. It is additionally noted that both the side strip and fastener are essentially the same feature in the illustrated embodiment, as feature 32 performs both functions defined for these features. Nevertheless, in some embodiments these two features could be separate elements.

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To more fully illustrate the details of the side strip/fastener the applicant encloses an additional drawings FIG. 3A which shows a cross-sectional view of the sign. This cross-sectional view clearly illustrates the projection and slot/groove formation of the side strip and fastener.

II. Claim Objection

The Examiner has objected to claim 26 on the basis that "the interconnecting side strip" lacks antecedent basis and claim 26 should more correctly depend from claim 24.

The applicant has amended claim 26 to depend from claim 24 as requested by the Examiner. Furthermore, the feature of "the interconnecting side strip" has been amended to read "the side strip", a feature which has clear antecedent basis in claim 24.

III. Rejection of claim 17 under 37 USC 102(b)

The Examiner has rejected independent Claim 17 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Hutton (US5,560,093). Independent claim 17 has been amended to more particularly define the characterizing features that the applicant believes are patentable in the invention. In this regard, the Examiner has noted in paragraph 5 that the "Hutton collar portions could theoretically be cut or trimmed to provide an opening of a different size". While we note that this is possible, we respectfully note that this feature is neither taught nor alluded to in Hutton. Furthermore, if a skilled person did attempt to cut or trim the collar portions of the Hutton apparatus as stated by the Examiner, the applicant believes the resulting apparatus would not be capable of being mounted to a street pole or other support element, as the configuration of the collar described in Hutton cannot be cut without impairing the clamping function which is used to mount the Hutton apparatus to a street pole.

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Notwithstanding this point, the applicant has taken the Examiner's comments under advisement and has accordingly amended the wording of independent Claim 17 to further define the characterizing feature of the present invention relating to the stepped collar arrangement and the function of this arrangement to provide different sized mounting apertures for mounting the sign to a support element. In particular, we directed the Examiner to the amended passages in claim 17:

"each collar portion providing a different sized aperture, said different sized apertures each providing a perimeter engagement surface adapted for engagement with a surface of the support element for mounting the sign to the support element"

and

"the support element to be received through or within the opening and the perimeter engagement surface of the selected aperture to engage the support element in such a manner allowing the housing to be securely attached to the support element using the fastener"

The applicant has therefore more clearly defined the invention of the present application as comprising a one size fits all type of sign having a collar type arrangement comprising a series of two or more collar portions having different sized apertures which provide a mounting surface. The different sized apertures allow a user to select a suitable aperture size which best suits the size of the support element and allows for the unsuitable collar portions removed by cutting or trimming. The suitable aperture is selected to allow the mounting surface of said selected aperture to engage the support element, and with aid of a fastener, the collar portion is secured to the pole, thereby mounting the sign to the support element.

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This particular feature of a selective adjustable mounting collar is not disclosed in Hutton. The apparatus disclosed in Hutton comprises a sleeve member which is only has a single fitting size allowing the apparatus to attached around a single size support element, namely a conventional utility pole such as a lamp standard. The mounting part of the apparatus consists of a sleeve member which closely surround the outside surface of the post, being attached by a pair of clamping bands at the top and bottom. Unlike the present invention defined in claim 17, the Hutton apparatus does not disclose the provision of a stepped collar structure having at least two selectable collar portions, each collar portion having engagement surfaces used to mount and secure the apparatus to a support element such as a pole using a fastener. Nor is this feature taught or alluded to in Hutton. It is therefore believed that claim 17 is patentably distinguished over Hutton.

IV. Rejection of claims 18 to 32 under 37 USC 102(b)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 18 to 32 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Hutton (US5,560,093).

As claims 18 to 32 are dependent from independent claim 17, now believed patentable, these claims are also believed patentable.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version With Markings to Show Changes Made.**"

The Applicant respectfully submits that the above amendments place this application in a condition for allowance, and passage to issue is respectfully solicited. The Applicant would like again to thank the Examiner for his efforts and

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patience in the examination of this application and for reconsideration of the claims as amended in light of the foregoing arguments.

Respectfully submitted



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADEIn the description

- 5 Please insert a new paragraph between paragraphs [0032] and [0033]:

[0032] FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the sign of FIG. 1 showing the display panel of one housing for conveying information.

- 10 FIG. 3A is a cross-sectional view of the sign of FIG. 3 showing the slot (33) and projection (35) of the side strip/fastener (32) used to connect the housing and backing member together.

- [0033] FIGS. 4 to 10 are each top-plan views of different alternative arrangements of the sign of the present invention formed from different numbers of various shaped housings interconnected together to form signs of
15 different shapes, but omitting details of the cooperating means for interconnecting the housings together.

In the claims:

- 20 Please insert amended claims 17 and 26:

17. (Amended) A sign for displaying indicia comprising:
_____ a housing having body portion provided with a display portion for displaying the indicia; and
25 at least one collar arrangement located at or towards one end of the body portion having at least a part of an opening within or through which a support element is received for allowing the sign to be supported on or by the support element in use; and
a fastener for securely attaching the collar arrangement to the support
30 element;
wherein said collar arrangement having comprises at least two individual collar portions of different sizes arranged in stepped relationship to one another forming openings of different sizes, each collar portion providing a different sized aperture, said different sized apertures each providing a perimeter
35 engagement surface adapted for engagement with a surface of the support element for mounting the sign to the support element;
and wherein so that each of the individual collar portions of an

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5 mismatched size can be selectively removed by cutting or trimming to adjust select the size of the aperture opening to match the size of the support element thereby enabling the support element to be received through or within the opening and the perimeter engagement surface of the selected aperture to
engage the support element in such a manner allowing the housing to be securely attached to the support element by using the fastener.

10 18. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 17 in which the collar arrangement of different sized collar portions arranged in a stepped relationship is located either at or towards the top or upper edge of the housing or at or towards the base or lower edge of the housing or at or towards both the top or upper edge and the base or bottom edge of the housing.

15 19. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 17 in which the collar portions of the collar arrangement are arranged in substantially parallel and substantially concentric stepped relationship to each other to form the openings of different sizes concentrically of each other for at least partially surrounding the support element when the housing is connected to the support element.

20 20. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 19 in which the collar portions comprise alternatively arranged flanges and risers so that the risers are arranged to extend longitudinally of the housing and the flanges are arranged to extend substantially perpendicular to the risers.

25 21. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 20 in which the alternatively arranged flanges and risers are arranged so that at least one riser is located between adjacent flanges and at least one flange is located between adjacent risers so that the size of the opening can be adjusted by selectively cutting either one of the flanges or one of the risers to size the opening to the
30 size of the support element.

22. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 17 in which the display portion provided on the main body is planer or curved.

35 23. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 22 in which the display portion is a display panel, said display panel for receiving a sheet directly on the panel, or the display panel is provided with a pocket for receiving therein a

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sheet containing the indicia to be displayed by the sign.

24. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 17 in which the housing is provided with a side strip or side flange located at or towards or along one side of the body portion for cooperatively engaging or interlockingly engaging with a similar or complementary shaped side flange or side strip of another similar housing when the two housings are connected together to form the sign.
25. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 17 in which the housing is connected to another housing or to a backing member or to a backing element around the support element to form the sign wherein the fastener connects the housings together or connects the housing to the backing member or backing element.
26. (Amended) A sign according to claim ~~25~~24 in which the ~~interconnecting~~ side strip or side flange includes a first part in the form of a projection and a second part in the form of a slot, channel, groove, rebate or cut-out, the first and second parts being complementary so that the projection is received in the slot or groove for interconnecting the housing to another housing so as to form the sign when said housings are interconnectedly fitted together about the support element.
27. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 26 in with the complementary projection and channel or groove is a tongue and groove arrangement or a tab and slot arrangement or a projection and cavity arrangement.
28. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 27 in which a single housing is provided with both the first part and the second part of the projection and cavity such that the projection is located at, towards or along one side or side edge of the housing and the cavity is located at or towards or along the other side of the housing.
29. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 28 comprising one, two, three, four or more similar or identical housings interconnected together by the respective side flanges or side strips along each side edge interlockingly connecting with each other to form the sign and the fastener being received

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around all of the housings for holding the housings together and securely fastening the housings to the support element.

- 5 30. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 17 in which the fastener is an elongate flexible member such as a band, strap, ribbon, tie, belt which wraps around the external surface of the collar portion either at the top or at the bottom or at both the top and the bottom of the housing to hold the housing together to form the sign so as to retain the sign on the support element.
- 10 31. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 17 in which the support element is a pole, post, upright or vertically extending support element.
- 15 32. (Unchanged) A sign according to claim 17 in the form of a road traffic sign.